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ABSTRACT

This cross-cultural investigation of racism in the lives of black women explores everyday manifestations and perceptions of racism. The daily experiences of individuals are combined with a structured account of racism in an interdisciplinary framework. Empirical data consist of verbal accounts gathered in 1985 and 1986 in non-directive interviews with 55 black women from large cities in California and the Netherlands. Subjects from the Netherlands were largely immigrants from Surinam. The more than 2,000 concrete examples of racism provide a quantitative base from which conclusions are drawn about the two cultures. It is apparent that racism is not only problematic in its extreme manifestations but that racism permeates the social system in both countries. Black women also experience racism as structured by notions of gender. In the Netherlands there is little historical knowledge about racism. In the United States, many women are explicitly informed by family members of the history of race relations. Denial of the existence of racism is prevalent in the Netherlands, and this denial becomes an instrument of repression in itself. In both societies, racism is an everyday experience for black women. There is a 541-item list of references. (SLD)

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